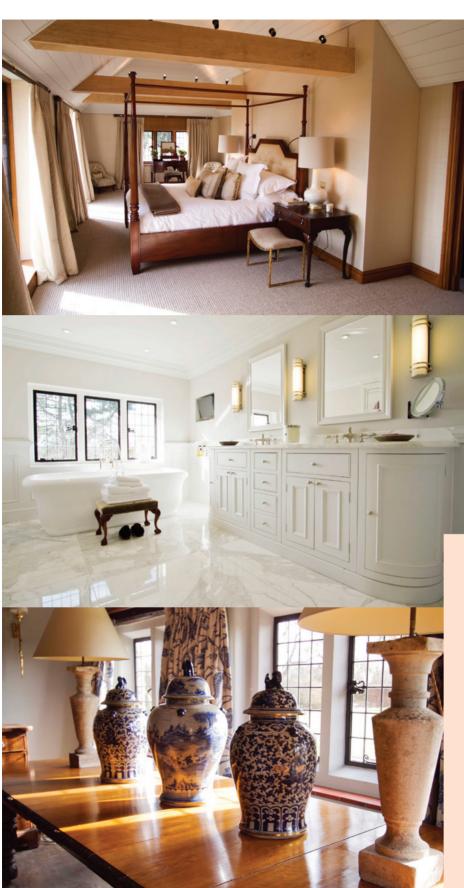


with Thomson Carpenter





Employing an interior designer is still a luxury and while it is becoming more commonplace, it is not for everyone. A designer has no place in helping you select things from IKEA! Having said that, if you do have a certain budget and a specific look in mind, a designer can help save you from making costly mistakes and ultimately, the finished look will likely be more polished and thought out. Do you have any tips for someone looking to employ a designer? Again, take your time. Look at the designer's portfolio. You may not like everything they've done in the past, but as long as you like the overall look you're on the right track. Also, make sure you get along. Designers and clients spend a lot of time together, often in very personal spaces (i.e. your home) so it's vital you build a strong working relationship. And for someone thinking about embarking on a career in interior design? Take time to gain experience, whether through a professional qualification or by working within a design organisation. Who has been your greatest source of inspiration over the years? It would have to be the great architects of England's classic age – like Sir Christopher Wren and Sir John Soane. Their use of scale, proportion and symmetry made for the most elegant compositions and continue to be a great source of inspiration.

For more go to thomsoncarpenter.co.uk and thomashamel.com

ABOUT THE HOUSE

The house is a Grade 2 Listed 17th Century manor-house set within a 700-acre park, deep in the West Sussex countryside. Very "beamed" and very much adapted over the years, the property has belonged to the current owners for about three decades but they decided a year ago that a complete renovation was required. Over the past 12 months, the house has been completely gutted and reconfigured, with new room lay-outs, walls removed and erected, a new kitchen installed, new bathrooms added and a conservatory installed. Floors have been lifted and replaced and although the owners wanted to retain a good collection of antiques, carte-blanche was given to the decorator with everything else. The result is a luxurious albeit comfortable family home, traditional but with a strong use of colour and ultimately, a very liveable house. Materials used have included raw linen, silk, cashmere, reclaimed French limestone, sisal, Calacatta marble and oak. Specific brands used include Ralph Lauren, Fox Linton, Jamb, Nicholas Haslam, Plain English, Water Monopoly, George Smith, Porta Romana, Vaughan, Soane, Threads, Beaumont And Fletcher and Colefax And Fowler.